

REMARKS:

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-10, 12-16 and 18 are pending in the present application.

First, in the initial Office Action, the Examiner did not provide verification of the receipt and consideration of the Information Disclosure Statement filed on June 29, 2004. A copy of this Information Disclosure Statement and the return postcard verifying its receipt at the Office of Initial Patent Examination is attached hereto.

Furthermore, Applicant notes that there is no recognition of the Preliminary Amendment filed on March 1, 2004. In this Preliminary Amendment, Applicant made certain minor amendments to claims 1, 6, 10 and 15. For example, Applicant corrected claims 6 and 15 to address the error that the Examiner now identifies in ¶ 2 of the initial Office Action. In any event, a copy of this Preliminary Amendment and the return postcard verifying its receipt at the Office of Initial Patent Examination is attached hereto. For purposes of the further claim amendments presented herein, the immediate prior version of each claim is considered to be the one found in the Preliminary Amendment.

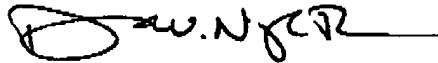
Moving on to the substantive issues in the Office Action, Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough review of the application and has amended the specification in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations. Furthermore, Applicant has amended claim 7 in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations and has cancelled claims 8 and 17 to render moot the cited § 112 indefiniteness concern.

With respect to the claims, in response to the Examiner's recognition that claim 2 would be allowable if re-written into independent form, claim 1 has been amended to include all of the limitations of original claim 2, and claim 2 has been cancelled. Therefore, Applicant respectfully

submits that claim 1 and associated dependent claims 3-7 and 9 are now in condition for allowance.

Similarly, claim 10 has been amended to include all of the limitations of original claim 11, and claim 11 has been cancelled. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 10 and associated dependent claims 12-16 and 18 are also in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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